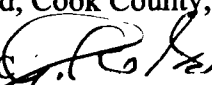




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2 123 199**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5****DATE:** February 23, 1999**SUBJECT:** Emergency Response Action to Propane Release Report at the Clark Oil Refinery Facilities in Blue Island, Cook County, Illinois (NRC Incident Report #)**FROM:** Paul R. Steadman, OSC 
Emergency Response Section III
Emergency Response Branch**TO:** Linda Nachowicz, Chief
Emergency Response Section IIIWilliam Bolen, Chief
Emergency Response Section IIWendy Carney, Acting Chief
Emergency Response Branch

An emergency response action was conducted at the subject facility on Monday, February 22, 1999. This OSC, as the Primary Responder, was called by the Spill Response Telephone Duty Officer, Charles Gebien, at 1820H to investigate a report of a propane release and emergency traffic control restrictions at the Clark Refinery. The report was made by the Cook County Sheriff's Department through our 24-hour Emergency Response Hotline. The release report had not been made to or received through the NRC at the time of its discovery as is customary for incidents of this type. The report from the Cook County Sheriff's Department occurred as a result of the noted irregularity of Clark Oil officials blocking the flow of traffic at and around five streets adjacent to the refinery and their observation of a low lying bluish haze near these facilities.

Upon my arrival at the facility the reported release conditions and traffic control restrictions had been abated. Emergency response actions entailed observing the overall general appearance of the refinery for any irregularities, continuous telephone contact with the Sheriff's Department as the Reporting Parties, Clark Oil Company officials and the Telephone Duty Officer, and subsequent interviews with the Cook County Sheriff's deputies and operational personnel with Clark Oil Company to determine the causes of the release and measures identified to prevent future releases. Likewise, Clark Oil Company officials were told that this release incident must be immediately reported to the NRC by them as a matter of procedure and not as a reportable quantity requisite by CERCLA regulations. Other regulations also prevail on reporting requirements. Propane is reportable when released in quantities of 100 pounds or more; it is a D001 listed waste and it is ignitable.

Through interviews with Clark Oil officials it was determined that an estimated 20 gallons of propane were released to the environment as a result of a gasket failure on the product side of the trim cooler which is located immediately before the storage vessel. Lower explosive limits of the propane were detected in the atmosphere for approximately 17 minutes until the storage supply pipeline could be blocked and the excess was the flared, and southeasterly winds helped to dissipate the release. It was further reported that such releases often occur when new gaskets are added to such units. The traffic control was a precautionary measure taken by Clark.

Persons interviewed included Cook County Sheriff's Department Sergeant Brown (Star No. 36), Sheriff's Deputy Biocic (Star No. 604), Clark Oil FCC Unit Supervisor Sam Micotra, Clark Oil Company Environmental Supervisor Dave Benner, and Clark Oil Company Shift Supervisor Hank Smith.

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